* **All students, 6th, 7th, and 8th, will take a technology survey starting April 18th and finishing by April 21st. The survey will be done during Science class time. After this year, 6th grade will take the survey in the fall and 8th grade in the spring. This is a DPI organized event.**
* **MAP testing will start April 25th using the same procedures as previous testing sessions.**
* **Faculty meeting will focus on curriculum, grading focus groups and E/R time.**

Current Research and Information—

# 2. Assigning Homework That Gets Done

            “For decades teachers have been baffled by those students who consistently come to class without completed homework assignments,” says Dowling College (NY) teacher Susan Voorhees in this article in *The Reading Teacher*. “In frustration, teachers sometimes label students ‘irresponsible,’ ‘unmotivated,’ and ‘uncaring.’” But Voorhees believes the problem is the homework assignments that teachers are sending home, which often contain reading and conceptual material way above students’ heads, producing frustration, tears, and avoidance.

            The solution, she believes, is for teachers to know their students’ reading proficiency and assign homework – or ways of getting homework done – that take these into account. Here is her checklist for teachers:

• Can all students decode the homework material and read it fluently and accurately without assistance? If not:

-   Provide easier text.

-   Arrange for a parent, older sibling, or homework buddy to help.

-   Provide books on tape.

-   Read the text first in class.

• Do all students have the prior knowledge, schema, and vocabulary needed to understand the assigned material? If not:

-   Develop students’ background knowledge through videos, demonstrations, picture books, picture walks, previewing text, read-alouds, class brainstorming and discussion, semantic organizers, concept maps, and anticipation guides.

• Do all students know how to use text structure – Narrative (story structure) and expository (main idea and details)? If not:

-   Develop students’ understanding of narrative text by reviewing story elements (characters, setting, events, climax, conflict, resolution, author’s theme), using story maps, and asking who, what, when, why, and how questions.

-   Develop students’ understanding of expository text (descriptive, sequential, comparison, cause/effect, problem/solution), use semantic organizers, ask who, what, where, why, and how questions.

• Do all students understand the purpose of the homework assignment? If not:

-   Generate in-class goal statements on the assignment.

-   Generate in-class purpose questions on the assignment.

-   Engage students in a K-W-L or anticipation guide.

• Do all students know how to activate prior knowledge prior to reading? If not:

-   Model and practice relating to new or known information prior to homework – text-to-self, text-to-text, text-to-world connections.

• Do all students have sufficient attention and ability to concentrate? If not:

-   Break up the assignment into doable pieces.

-   Give shorter reading assignments.

-   Teach comprehension strategies like K-W-L, setting a purpose, relating new to unknown.

• Do all students have high self-efficacy toward homework and literacy? If not:

-   Emphasize why students will be successful completing the assignment.

-   Assure students that attempts will be praised and homework is not graded.

• Do all students get parental help with homework? If not:

-   Develop a homework club after school.

-   Assignment homework that can be completed solo.

-   Save projects (e.g., science experiments) for in class.

-   Investigate the reasons for incomplete work; be understanding.

“Why the Dog Eats Nikki’s Homework: Making Informed Assignment Decisions” by Susan Voorhees in *The Reading Teacher*, February 2011 (Vol. 64, #5, p. 363-367), no e-link available; Voorhees can be reached at [voorhees@dowling.edu](mailto:voorhees@dowling.edu).

***FROM THE “DON’T FORGET” FILES:***

1. **Please check my wiki space at** <http://aviewfromtheknol.wikispaces.com/> **and check the discussion tab to interact with what is posted.**
2. **In order to better document parent contact we can now use Infinite Campus as a tool to record Student Study Team meetings, parent meetings, emails, phone conferences and all other methods of contact that should be documented. Use this method in place of any other phone logs or documentation.**

***“Search” tabs and find the student and click on the student’s name***

***“Index” tab and click on “Student Information”***

***“PLP” tab and click on “Contact Log” then click on “New Event”***

***Fill out the form and save.***

**The entry may be brief, highlight what was talked about and with whom; dates and times will be entered as you indicate. When you enter SST information, just write what was accomplished—the strategies/accommodations to be used; something very quick.**

***Important dates from the fig tree:***

* Budgets are due in my office March 18th.
* Faculty meeting March 24th.
* Tech Survey April 18-21
* MAP testing April 25-29.